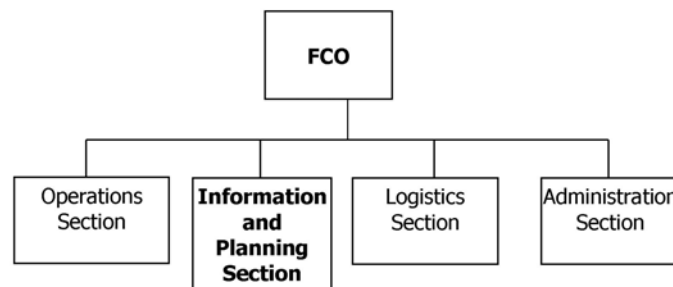# Unit 5:
# Information and Planning

## Overview

The Emergency Response Team (ERT) and other emergency teams follows Incident Command System (ICS) organizational principles.  Planning is one of the four core functions of ICS.

The Information and Planning Section is one of four sections that serve under the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) on the ERT.



Major functions of Information and Planning are:

❏  Planning support and analysis

❏  Information collection and reporting

❏  Remote sensing

❏  Geographic information systems and predictive modeling

Information and Planning is also known as ESF-5.  The primary agency for ESF-5 is the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).  FEMA is supported in this effort by the many other Federal agencies.

## Purpose

The purpose of Emergency Support Function (ESF)-5, Information and Planning, is to collect, process, and disseminate information about a potential or actual disaster or emergency, and conduct planning to support the overall activities of the Federal government in providing response assistance to an affected State.

Information and Planning is responsible for coordinating overall information and planning activities at Headquarters, in the Regions, and at field offices in support of Federal response operations.

## Information and Planning Organization

ESF-5 activities are grouped among the following branches.

❑ Situation Status Branch—Collects, analyzes, validates and processes information from the State, ESFs and other sources, disseminates information for use by response operations; and provides data in the form of displays and briefings, and as input for reports and planning.

❑ Documentation Branch—Consolidates information into reports and other materials to describe and document overall response activities and to keep ERT, Regional and national offices, including heads of departments and agencies, Congress, and the White House, informed of the status of the overall response operation.

❑ Planning Support Branch—Facilitates and manages operational planning activities, including Action Planning, Strategic Planning, and Special Function Planning.

❑ Technical Services Branch—Coordinates the acquisition and exploitation of remote sensing (satellite imagery and aerial photography) and production of Geographic Information System (GIS) maps and other products to support response efforts.

**Note:** If all or part of the Federal Response Plan (FRP) is activated, ESF-5 will automatically be activated to support information-processing activities.

A complete reading of ESF-5's responsibilities can be found at http://www.fema.gov. Click on Hot Topics; click on Library; click on Response and Recovery. Hyperlinks to the ERT Information and Planning Section Operations Manual, Remote Sensing Standard Operating Procedures, and Federal Response Plan (FRP) can be found there.

The following subjects will be discussed in this unit:

❏ Assessment capabilities

❏ Action Planning process

❏ Planning and Analysis support

## Assessment Capabilities

Assessment components include:

❏ Predictive modeling

❏ Remote sensing (aerial photography and satellite imagery)

❏ Rapid needs assessment

❏ Damage assessment

### Predictive Modeling (Technical Services Branch)

Predictive models provide a tool for predicting the scope and effect of an event. Models are used to:

❏ Estimate potential impacts of natural disasters or other events —"sizing up" the event

❏ Estimate potential resource requirements

❏ Support decisionmaking and action planning

Examples of predictive models include:

❏ Consequence Assessment Tool Set (CATS)

❏ Hazards-United States (HAZUS)

❏ Sea, Lake, and Overland Surges from Hurricanes (SLOSH)

## Remote Sensing (Technical Services Branch)

Remote sensing is an automated ground, air, or space-based system for capturing and/or measuring changes to the physical environment.

Remote sensing:

❑ Is used to obtain disaster-specific damage information not available through other sources.

❑ Provides rapid acquisition of visual data over large or remote areas.

❑ Facilitates fast, efficient resource deployments and allocations.
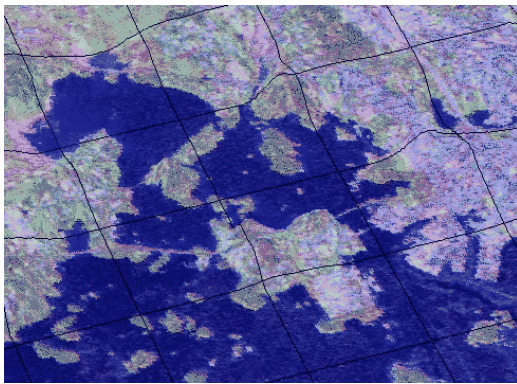


Aerial photography is the use of fixed-wing or rotary aircraft to collect imagery to support disaster assessment operations.



Aerial photography is used to:

❑ Obtain a general overview of a relatively wide geographic area.

❑ Conduct assessments in remote or isolated locations.

❑ Obtain data (e.g., photos for evaluation) of specific locations or sites.

The nature and uses of satellite data differ from aerial photography in the following ways:

❑ Satellite services are not available for "real time" or "near real time" taskings. Aerial photography can be tasked locally on short notice.

❑ Satellite imagery is typically lower resolution and requires analysis to obtain meaningful damage assessment information. However, disaster responders can often directly interpret the results of aerial photography.

❑ Satellite operations are not affected by weather, but weather is a major factor in aerial operations. Conversely, while cloud cover may prevent a satellite from imaging an area, an aircraft may be able to fly beneath the clouds.

# Action Planning Process

Action planning is the development of a short-term outline of significant operations and activities planned for a single operational period.

The process is priority-based, i.e., it is designed to identify and track specific, measurable objectives that directly support the priority concerns of the FCO.

Action Planning:

❑ Provides a summary of key objectives planned for the next operational period.

❑ Provides measurability of and accountability for objective accomplishment.

FCO and Section Chief support is crucial to successful action planning.

The Operational Period:

❑ Is set by the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO), in coordination with the Information and Planning and Operations Section Chiefs.

❑ May be as short as 8 to 12 hours or as long as a week or more, depending on operational requirements.

Generally, the Operational Period is 24 hours during the initial weeks of an operation, and progresses to a longer duration as the operational pace decreases.

## Operational Actions

The key part of the Action Planning process is developing operational actions.

Multiple factors and considerations play a role in the development of operational actions

Operational Actions must:

❑ Support and be compatible with State planning.
❑ Support FCO priorities.
❑ Be based on coordination and discussion among ERT elements.

The terms "Operational Action" and "FCO Priority" are not interchangeable.

❑ An FCO Priority is a general direction of emphasis; an Operational Action is a specific target.
❑ An FCO Priority is determined by the FCO (and SCO), while the individual ERT functional area determines an Operational Action.
❑ An FCO Priority may be of indeterminate duration, but an Operational Action should be achievable within an operational period.

The steps in the Action Planning process are:

1. Priorities established/affirmed by FCO
2. Operational actions developed by ERT Functional Areas
3. Action Planning Meeting conducted to discuss and approve Action Plan
4. FCO-approved plan finalized and published
5. Plan implemented
6. Plan evaluated

The process offers a number of advantages to managers.  Action Planning:

❑ Allows the FCO and other leaders and managers to measure performance against specific goals and objectives.
❑ Ensures that all ERT components operate in a unified, synchronized manner.
❑ Maximizes control while minimizing effort.

# Other Types of Information and Planning Support

The Planning Support Branch offers other planning services to ERT management.

## Other Plans

Planning Support Branch staff can prepare:

❑ Strategic plans

❑ Contingency plans

❑ Special Function Plans

❑ Transition plans

❑ Demobilization plans

## Types of Analysis and Analytical Products (Situation Status Branch)

Situation Status Branch staff can provide:

❑ Trend analysis

❑ Critical resource analysis

❑ Jurisdictional profiling

❑ Daily intelligence summaries

❑ Special analyses

❑ Situation Briefings

## Information Collection/ Dissemination

The Situation Status Branch collects and reports:

❑ Disaster assessment information

❑ Status of mission assignments

❑ Status of operational objectives

❑ Critical issues

❑ Status of programs

❑ Functional area statistics (daily/cumulative)

The Situation Status Branch develops and maintains an Information Collection Plan that targets and concentrates collection activities on high-value information, a.k.a. Essential Elements of Information (EEIs).

## Documentation Products (Documentation Branch)

The Documentation Branch is responsible for developing and preparing many situational and recurring reports, briefings, and other products.  Chief among them are:

❑ Situation Report
❑ Fact Sheet
❑ Situation Updates
❑ ERT Chronology
❑ After-Action Report


## Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA)

A regionally based and managed team may conduct a Rapid Needs Assessment immediately after a disaster or emergency incident.

The RNA concept is designed to help States determine what and where critical, unmet needs exist within an area affected by large or catastrophic disasters.

The RNA team is part of the ERT-A.  The assessment team:

❑ Includes interagency members.
❑ Is self-contained and self-sufficient.
❑ Is intended to complete a needs assessment mission within 24 to 72 hours.

Rapid Needs Assessment should not be confused with damage assessment activity (i.e., Preliminary Damage Assessment), which is a functionally unrelated activity. In damage assessment:

❑ Timeliness is not as significant a factor.

❑ Information collection focuses on program requirements and estimating recovery costs.

❑ Follow-up information is provided through housing inspections and Project Worksheets.

## Geographic Information Systems (GIS) (Technical Services Branch)

GIS is defined as:

❑ An information system designed to work with data referenced by spatial or geographic coordinates.

❑ Both a database system and a set of operations for working with the data.

GIS is used to:

❑ Conduct geospatial analyses of information.

❑ Depict disaster boundaries and estimate impacts.

❑ Identify various categories of key facilities located in, or around, a damaged area.